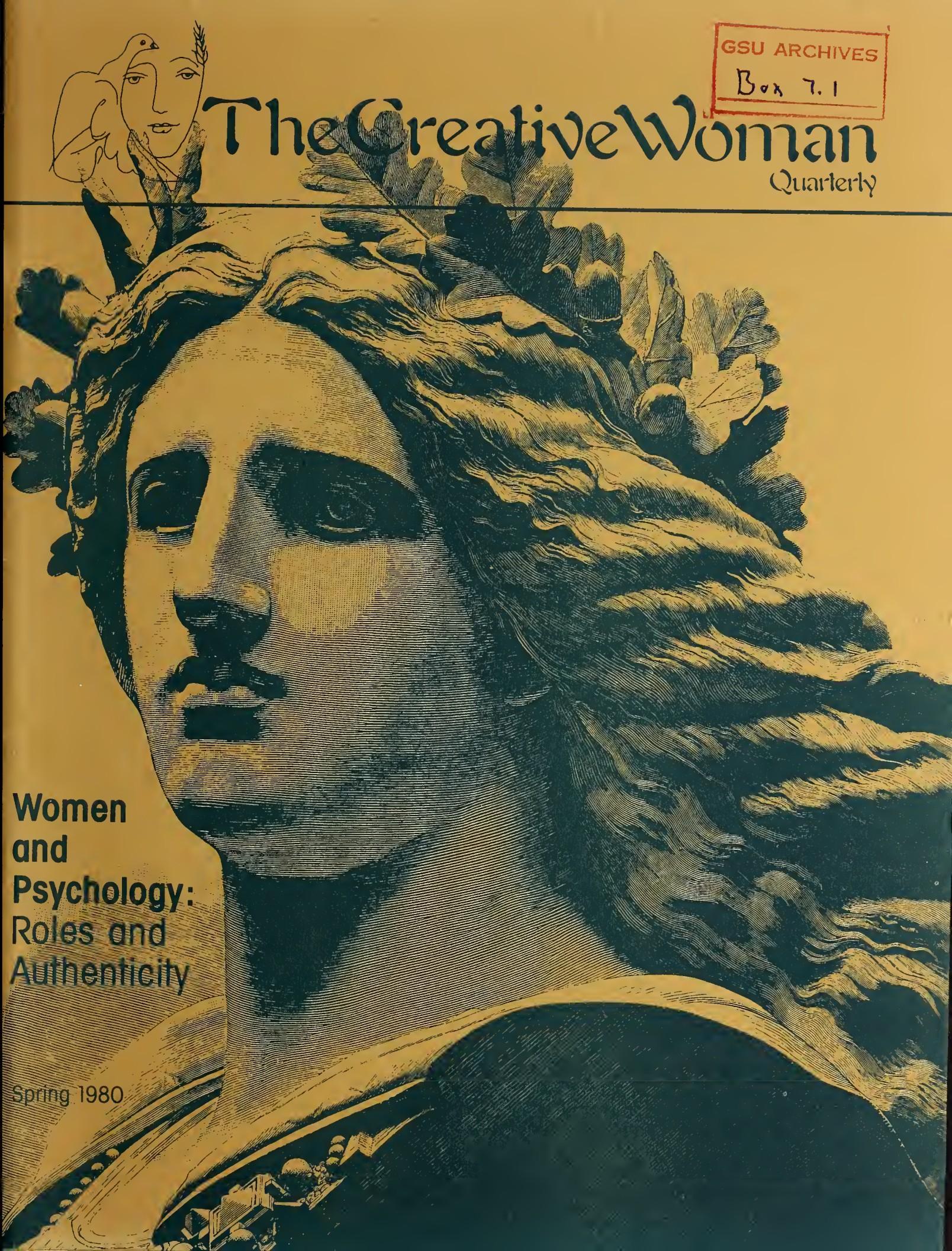


GSU ARCHIVES

Box 7.1

# The Creative Woman

Quarterly



Women  
and  
Psychology:  
Roles and  
Authenticity

Spring 1980



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Pam Rebeck and  
Elfie Hinterkopf

## Page TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction  
*Pam Rebeck & Elfie Hinterkopf,  
Guest Editors*
- 2 Female Sexuality  
*Helen E. Hughes*
- 7 Women and Self-esteem: A Search for  
a New Identity  
*Sandra V. Whitaker*
- 11 Women Earn a New Identity  
*Carol LeFevre*
- 16 On The Feminist Study of Motherhood  
*Terri Pease-Schwartz*
- 22 The High Achieving Woman & Stress  
*Pam Rebeck & Bonnie Rudolph*
- 24 Breast Cancer and Peer Counseling  
*Mimi Kaplan & Ann Marcou*
- 27 Focusing: A Method For Achieving  
Authentic Roles  
*Elfie Hinterkopf*
- 30 Changing Men  
*David Matteson*
- 33 Letter From Holland  
*Helen Hughes*
- 36 From The USSR: A New Feminist  
Underground Publication

## Future Issues:

**WOMEN AND NATURE: SURVIVING THE  
TECHNOLOGICAL AGE**, Summer 1980.  
A look at Ecology and the special  
contributions made by women to  
a better understanding of the  
relationships among all living  
beings as well as our relation to  
the environment. Guest editors  
will be Bethe Hagens (editor of  
*Acorn, Outlook*, and professor  
of anthropology at GSU) and  
Joan Lewis, of our staff.  
Deadline for contributions is  
June 21, 1980.

**AGING: WHAT WE DO-HOW WE FEEL.**  
Fall 1980. Inspired by her work  
with senior citizens, our guest  
editor Marge Sharp is very  
excited about this issue. We  
especially invite women to  
submit articles on their own  
feelings and experiences of  
what Simone de Beauvoir has  
called "The Coming of Age."  
Deadline September 21, 1980.

**WOMEN ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER**  
Winter 1981. Our guest editor  
Dr. Beverly Beeton, historian  
and Executive Assistant to  
President of Governors State  
University invites articles,  
songs, biographical sketches,  
etc. on homesteader experiences,  
American Indian women, trail  
experiences, loneliness, and  
any other appropriate genre.  
Deadline December 21, 1980.

An Introduction.....  
by Pam Rebeck & Elfie Hinterkopf,  
Guest Editors

Changing roles is currently a major issue in the field of psychology, reflecting what may be a universal phenomena which reaches across cultures and continents. The search for authenticity has led both women and men in our society to grapple with the pains and rewards of rapidly changing sex roles. This professional preoccupation is readily apparent in the Spring issue of The Creative Woman, devoted to Women and Psychology. Our authors all discuss the development of a personalized value system--the internal reference point so necessary to becoming an authentic human being. With the rapid desintegration of traditional sex roles as accepted norms, all that is left to guide behavior is personal need balanced within a societal framework. Never has it been more necessary to "know thyself".

Helen Hughes presents an historical perspective of the benevolent influence of matriarchies. She elaborates on the connection between the historical development of orientations generally ascribed as feminine, (such as peace, nature, religion and nurturing) and the biological roots of female sexuality.

Sandra Whitaker links self-esteem to masculine characteristics such as ascendance, independence, lack of emotion, confidence and good cognitive processes. Her research shows that women have lower self-esteem than men because the characteristics such as emotionality, dependence, and poor cognitive processes associated with femininity are less favorable. She addresses the question of how to raise the level of self-esteem in women.

Carol LeFevre writes about the experiences of women who are turning from careers in the home to graduate school. These women must change their role identity from one based

on biology and relationship to one of autonomy, competence and achievement. Dr. LeFevre takes the position that women must bring together both of these identities and in doing so they reach a higher stage in their personal psychosocial development.

Terri Pease-Schwartz exploring the experience of motherhood from the perspective of psychoanalytic psychology and the experience of those women who have borne and raised children asks a new question. Does the mothering experience, rather than being a limbo for the (self-actualizing) liberated woman, really offer a valuable experience for psychic growth?

In their article Pam Rebeck and Bonnie Rudolph outline some of the variables that contribute to an intense level of stress for the high achieving woman, and suggest some methods for coping with stress.

Mimi Kaplan and Ann Marcou find that women who undergo mastectomies are more concerned with the threat to their lives than the more cosmetic issue of breast loss. They have found that women in peer counseling groups offer each other needed information, assurance and encouragement.

Elfie Hinterkopf finds focusing a means of personal trust in the search for authenticity in the midst of rapidly changing sex roles. Through the use of focusing, women can learn to create roles from within, rather than living according to externally created sex-role expectations.

Dave Matteson offers a perspective on how men are adjusting to changing sex roles and suggests that men will change when they experience alternative ways of being male as modeled by other men.

Reflected in all these articles are the personal and professional struggles of these authors and those of their subjects/clients in a human condition we will all share in the '80's--the search for authenticity.

## FEMALE SEXUALITY

by Helen E. Hughes

My purpose in this article is to clear away some of the junk that has accumulated around this question. We women have been sold a bill of goods! We are about the task of freeing ourselves from contradictory and demeaning stereotypes.



To understand our own sexuality, let us consider the evidence from biology, history and sex research, but let us make our own experience and consciousness the primary means of validation. In Robert Levin's preface to Masters and Johnson's book, The Pleasure Bond, he writes, "To know is one thing; to be comfortable with what one knows is another; to choose what is right for oneself is still another." Women are discovering today that they have a fresh opportunity to make a personal choice about how they wish to experience their sexuality.

Let us start with biology. In the beginning, we were all created female. All mammalian embryos are innately female. Six weeks after conception, if the fetus is genetically programmed to become a male, androgen is added. John Money, researcher in sex and gender, says, "Nature simply uses the rule: add androgen and get a male; do nothing and get a female." The female is the basic model of the species. The male is a variation. So Eve was not made from Adam's rib. Adam evolved from the basic form--Eve. It is important for women to get this concept in our heads because for the biologist, in a real sense, the female is the species. When Simone de Beauvoir wrote her book on the cultural devaluation of women, she called it The Second Sex, and it massively documented the effects of male dominance, primacy, and their almost unbelievable subjugation of women. Now we know that woman is in fact The First Sex and that she is blessed with many biological advantages which have been listed by Elizabeth Gould Davis in her book by that name: "More efficient metabolism, the more specialized organs, the greater resistance to disease, the built-in immunity to certain specific ailments, the extra X chromosome, the more convoluted brain, the stronger heart and the longer life" (1971, p. 329).

I am not sure about all of that, but it does seem clear from Nancy Bayley that females are less vulnerable than males according to the data from her longitudinal study. Bayley found that the females in her group of babies who were born in 1929 and whose lives she is still following, were "more reslient, less susceptible to the ups and downs of the environment... (and they) tend to return to an innate potential." Such scientific studies have enabled women to re-assess themselves and the meaning of their sexuality. Among our biological advantages are several marked sexual capacities: a more complete sexual apparatus, the capacity for multiple or sustained orgasmic response, and the "triple sensuality" described by Niles Newton as erotic pleasure derived from childbirth and breastfeeding as well as intercourse and other direct genital stimulation. More on this later.

Freud called the clitoris "a stunted penis" and reasoned that as a result of her genital inferiority woman was also morally inferior, had an inadequate sense of justice, was masochistic and passive. Mary Jane Sherfey, also a psychiatrist, wrote in 1966, "Embryologically speaking, it is correct to say that the penis is an exaggerated clitoris, the scrotum is derived from the labia majora, etc." Take your choice!

In the matter of scientific understanding, at least, we have come a long way: from Lord Acton to Masters and Johnson. Dr. Acton, London urologist and leading authority of his time, wrote in 1857 that it was a "vile aspersion" to even suggest that women had any sexual nature since "the majority of women--happily for society--are not very much troubled with sexual feelings of any kind." Rene Spitz has written of the thousands of mutilating excisions of the clitoris (clitoridectomy) performed in the 19th and early 20th century to cure

girls and women of the unhealthy habit of masturbation. There was an entire medical journal devoted to the exchange of papers on what they called Orificial Surgery.

For Sherfey, on the other hand, female sexual appetite is literally insatiable and the nymphomaniac is the biological norm. Masters and Johnson write, matter of factly, "Most women will be satisfied with three to five orgasms."

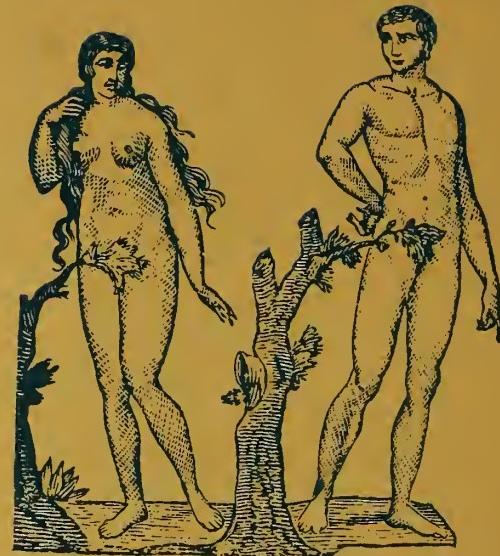
Now, that's a distance!

With the growing scientific evidence of the extraordinary sexual capacity of the female, changes in attitudes, behaviors and feelings are inevitable. We can observe extreme views across the entire spectrum of opinion. What shall we believe and how shall we sort out the arguments about clitoral vs. vaginal orgasms, for example, and all the political ramifications and implications of the debate? By attending, I should like to suggest, to our own bodies and our own experiences. There is something ludicrous in the spectacle of a room full of male psychoanalysts arguing about whether there is a difference between vaginal and clitoral orgasms and what the meaning of the difference is: i.e., one is "immature", the other is "mature".

Before leaving the biological perspective I invite your attention to the work of Niles Newton. She has written that women are "trebly sensuous" because female sexuality includes three reproductive acts that involve two persons: intercourse, birth and breastfeeding. Sex researchers from Kinsey and Ellis to Masters and Johnson have supported her argument by noting their own observations. If childbirth is undisturbed and undrugged, it is comparable to sexual excitement and orgasm if one compares breathing, vocalization, facial expression, reactions in the uterus, the cervix, the abdominal muscles,

the central nervous system, the unusual strength and flexibility of the body, sensory perception, and --last and most important-- the subjective emotional response. If you are my age, you will have missed that great erotic experience, most likely, and will have delivered your babies strapped down in a white, sterile room, attended by a male doctor, frightened, and knocked out by anesthesia. If you are the age of my two daughters-in-law (or my mother) you may have had the experience described in the book Two Births. Examine the faces of these women giving birth. Similar findings are reported by anthropologists who have lived and worked among primitive tribes. Lactation, similarly, state Masters and Johnson, is related to erotic arousal. It is also interesting that mothers who breast feed are more tolerant of their children's sex play, are less punitive and repressive.

Finally, females are also biologically blessed with the capacity to enjoy full sexual response throughout their entire lifespan, with no upper limit. Now that we live longer, we have discovered that middle age can be a time of productivity and growth and that sexual response continues into very old age. Clara Thompson, psychoanalyst, has written, "If a woman's whole identity is defined by her menstrual cycle which gives her validity in the culture only as a childbearing person, the menopause can be a painful and difficult time. But if she is able to make connections with the culture as a person in her own right, the event of menopause recedes into perspective and is no longer a signal of the end of life." Many in our society dread old age partly because of the fear of the loss of attractiveness and opportunities for pleasure. It is time to destroy the stereotype of "sexless old age." The pace and timing of sexual activity change, it is true, but satisfaction need not. "There is no time limit drawn by the advancing years to female sexuality"



state Masters and Johnson.

The next idea I want to explore is the notion of a primitive matriarchy, existing in prehistory, which comes down to us through legends, epic poetry, works of art, legal conceptions and language itself. Was there such an era? If so, what was it like? What meaning does it have for us today as we look for new patterns for relationships between women and men?

Bachofen and Briffault are two important names. They recorded the evidence from their studies of ancient, pre-Hellenic societies and theorized on the course of human evolution into civilization which they saw as including a kind of golden age, a "lost Paradise", for which all of us have a kind of yearning, a homesickness. According to their theory, primordial human societies were characterized by brutal and vicious casual groupings of dominant males who used and abused the females with impunity, with matings random and unregulated. It was the female who rebelled against this state of affairs, established the family by gathering her children about her, invented agriculture while the males were out hunting, and asserted her authority to maintain the welfare of the group by initiating food-sharing, regulating

sexuality, controlling property, religion, knowledge and law. They cite the universal matriarchal theme in ancient Egypt (where Isis has primacy over Osiris), in Africa, in India and in Crete as well as in North America where the Iroquois and the Navajo were especially noted for the matriarchal structure of their society. Erich Fromm has praised the values of matriarchy as valuing peace, nature, religion, the community and as nurturing adventure and beauty. Patriarchal values, for Fromm, stress individualization, science, competition, war and law-as-revenge. Bachofen and Sherfey agree that the matriarchy was wholly positive and that it evolved from the female reaction to unregulated sexuality.

It is of especial interest that matriarchy appears to be much better for the male of the species than patriarchy is for the female. Without recapitulating the oppression of women that has been attendant on the dominance of the male, let me point out the benefits to males of a matriarchy. In the fertile valleys of the Malabar coast of southwest India a matriarchal society has survived into modern times. There is a high level of education and literacy and many eminent men have come from this region to be educated in England. The women own the property, inheritance is matrilineal and the great freedom of the women was expressed in polyandry. Whichever of her several husbands is in residence announces his presence by leaving his shoes outside the door. (In old Arabian nomadic groups, the husband in residence thrust his staff into the ground outside the tent.) I think it is significant that men prospered and flourished in the nurturance and peace and harmony of that system in which women had economic, political and sexual control.

Evangeline Walton has written a trilogy based on the Welsh epic, the Mabinogian: Island of the Mighty,

The Children of Llyr and The Birds of Rhiannon. In these fantasies Walton describes for us how the "Great Change" happened historically from the time of the "ancient harmonies" when women ruled and peace, beauty and religion flourished to the times of the seizing of power by the men. The crucial event was the discovery of paternity. Until men figured out how babies got started, women were the all-powerful mysterious force, the creators of life. (Gloria Steinem says that women figured it out about five thousand years before men did, and that our biggest mistake was to ever let them know they had a part in it!) Nevertheless, men did learn that they played an essential part in the bringing to birth of a new human being. And then followed: instead of peace, harmony and polyandry, which were beneficial to all concerned, we got the necessity to establish paternal succession, and therefore virgin brides (previously unheard of and in most primitive societies an unthinkable delay of important experiences), enforced chastity of wives, chastity belts, clitoridectomies, sexual jealousy, rape, competition and war. The entire catastrophe! In Hebrew history, also, one sees the emergence from matriarchy and the worship of Ishtar and abundant sexuality to patriarchy and the worship of a stern Yahwey.

In fairness, let us note that the male ascendancy also made possible the rise of science, engineering, technology and other familiar, treasured, essential, mixed blessings. If matriarchal values are so beneficial to all members of the human community, what are our chances of reconstituting it? Not very good, I fear. We cannot go home again. The human longing for the lost Paradise, some ancient golden age, an "Eden"--this remains a permanent part of our human consciousness. What we can and must do is to try to reassert the values, if not the institutions, that our mothers struggled for and won.

The remnants of that era remain in our language. For example, the word matrimony means literally mother-marriage, suggesting the primacy of the female in the original institution of marriage. Patrimony means inheritance. In languages that assign gender to abstract nouns, the words for devotion, justice, peace, all the qualities that embellish human life, are feminine. Why is that?

I hope that these ideas will encourage you to think about yourself and to explore some of the implications of the social changes that we are going through in this century. Perhaps Shere Hite is right when she writes that women are ready to re-define sex. We are in a period of transition. We have many options. There is no reason why the standard pattern of intercourse should be "the old mechanical pattern" designed to meet the needs of the male. What do women want? Of the 3000 women who responded to Hite's questionnaire, five wrote:

"I wish men would be more sensitive."

"I would like more love and gentleness, more emotion and communication."

"I'd like to change the whole ...routine."

"I would like to be able to sustain sexual activity indefinitely."

"If only people would let down their fake fronts and be honest."

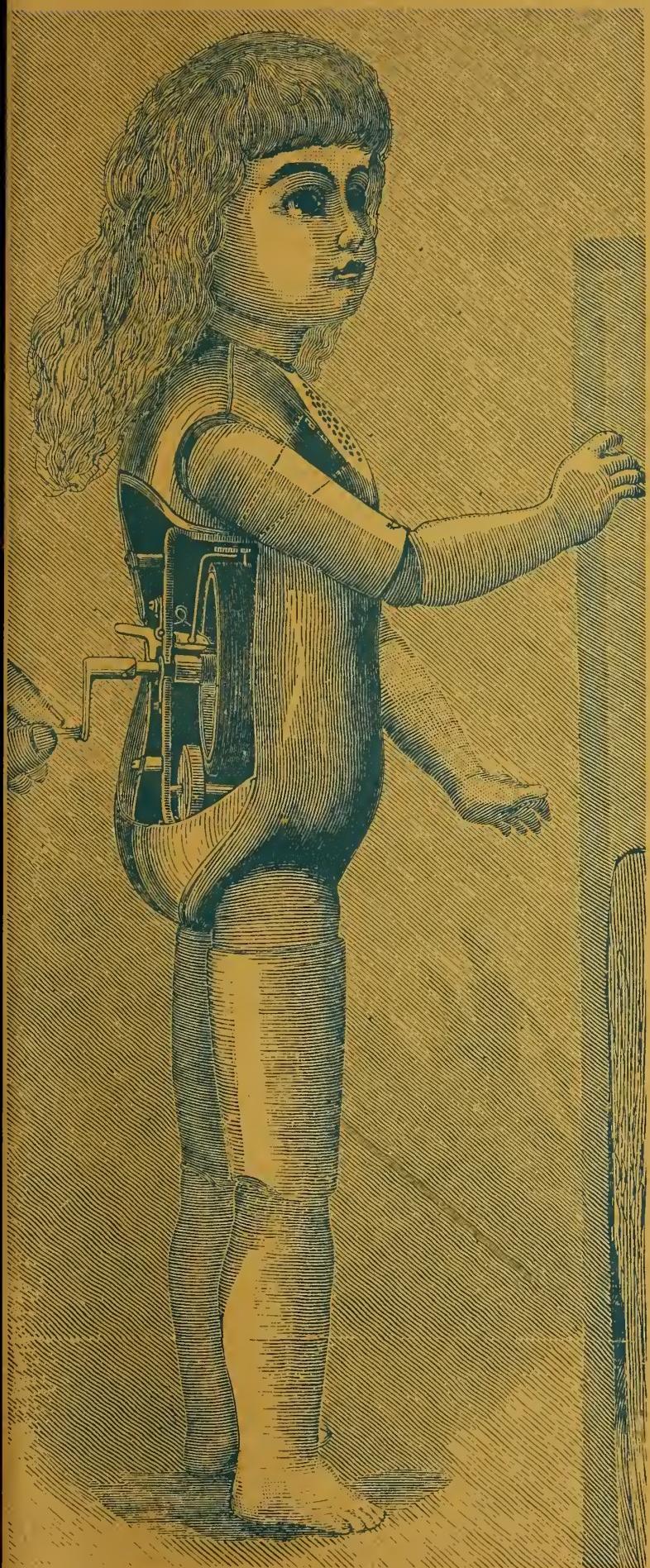
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This article has been adapted from a talk given to the South Suburban Women's Liberation Group on August 13, 1977.

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WOMEN AND SELF-ESTEEM: A SEARCH  
FOR A NEW IDENTITY

by Sandra V. Whitaker, Ph.D.

Self-esteem has been used to define an individual's feelings of self-worth. It has been correlated with a wide variety of human behaviors, from the ability to give and receive love (Rogers and Dzmond, 1954), to the ability to achieve autonomy and professional success (Dickstein, 1970), to the development of strong interests (Ohlde, 1979) and even to better visual acuity (Veldman, 1970).

At the same time that the benefits of self-esteem have been so loudly acclaimed, differences in the feelings of self-worth between the two sexes have been found. Women are reported as having lower self-esteem than men. It is the intent of this article to show supportive evidence for sex-differences in self-esteem in the hope of shedding some light on the antecedents of self-esteem in women. A theoretical position to improve women's self-esteem will be advanced.

Although social scientists' original concern was not directly related to self-esteem, a series of studies by Sheriff and McKee (1957) led to the then startling revelation that men and women differed in their reported feelings of self-esteem. Testing traditional white college students, the results overwhelmingly showed both men and women assigning to men a significantly large number of adjectives previously rated by both sexes as being socially favorable, and assigning to women a significantly large number of socially unfavorable adjectives. Even more surprising was the finding that women were more negative than men about themselves as well as toward other women. Men's favorable characteristics were: ascendancy, independence, forcefulness, unemotionality, confidence, responsi-

bility and possession of good cognitive processes. In contrast to these findings, women were viewed by both sexes as dependent, unforceful, emotional, irresponsible and having poor cognitive processes--characteristics rated by both sexes as socially undesirable.

A decade later, Rosenkrantz (1968) confirmed these results obtained by Sheriff and McKee. Both white men and women considered male attributes to be significantly more desirable, and both viewed women with less regard than men. In addition, for the first time male and female stereotypes were directly related to the subjects' feelings of self-esteem. Female self-esteem decreased to the extent that women assigned to themselves the traditional female characteristics, and white men retained their higher degree of self-esteem to the extent that they attributed to themselves the traditionally masculine characteristics.

In spite of the women's movement and national efforts to increase equality between the sexes, a large proportion of women believe men to be superior. This belief is even present among the very young, with no changes indicated between 1968 and 1975. (Bush, 1977).

This author, in testing white college students (Whitaker, 1974) not only found the same results, but was also able to manipulate male and female self-esteem based on assigned masculine and feminine characteristics. The subjects were led to believe that previous psychological testing, administered by a Certified Psychologist, indicated they had a higher or lower proportion of masculine or feminine characteristics. Women told that they had a greater number of masculine characteristics increased their level of self-esteem, while men who were informed that they had a greater number of feminine characteristics experienced a decrease in self-esteem. Later on, during the debriefing period, when the subjects were told the true nature of the experiment, most women subjects

expressed disappointment at not indeed having more masculine characteristics. They agreed that stereotypic masculine characteristics are more valued in our society.

It appears that differences in feelings of self-worth between white men and women have persisted across time. Studies during the past decade have increased; different self-esteem measuring instruments and more sophisticated research designs have been used, but the results have persistently remained the same. White females have lower self-esteem than white males, as observed in childhood (Fein, 1975) through adulthood (Wilson and Wilson, 1976), among different occupations (Ross, 1977) and even among alcoholics (Beckman, 1978) and drug addicts (Gossop, 1976).

The evidence for sex-differences in self-esteem between black men and women, or between women members of different ethnic groups, is meager and not conclusive. The most consistent, as well as surprising results have been that black females have higher self-esteem than white females. (Simmons, 1977 & 1978). An investigation conducted at Governors State University (Whitaker, 1976) comparing the self-esteem of black, white and latino women, showed the self-esteem of black women slightly higher than that of white women. Both black and white women had a significantly higher self-esteem than the latino women. These findings pose serious questions regarding the development of self-esteem in women.

Social scientists have followed two main lines of thought in explaining the development of self-esteem, citing the individual's sense of competency or the relationship with one's parents. The most popular theory of the origins of self-esteem is advanced by Coopersmith (1967) in his pioneering studies on the development of self-esteem in boys. He found boys' feelings of self-esteem to be based on their perception of what their fathers thought of them.

Interestingly enough, the boys' perception of what their mothers thought of them was not found relevant.

As in most areas of psychology, the focus was on males, and the interest in females has only been of recent concern. Investigations of the development of self-esteem in girls has not produced conclusive results. Some authors (Dickstein, 1978) attribute self-esteem in girls to the mother-daughter relationship, while others (Loeb, 1978) think both parents shape the girl's self-esteem. The mother-daughter hypothesis loses strength in the face of other related evidence. Women's achievement and self-esteem are reported to have a positive correlation (Primavera, 1974); while, on the other hand, women who achieve are reported to have rejected their mothers. (Bardwick, 1971). Neither explains the significant differences in self-esteem between men and women.

A more obvious explanation would be that parents, as members of our society, reflect the beliefs of the society in which they live. These beliefs are transmitted to their children, who in turn develop attitudes based on a common belief system. As clearly documented in this paper, our society upholds male superiority. It also values more the masculine roles and all the personality characteristics believed needed to perform these roles. Historically, masculinity has been associated with competency and the ability to better survive in this world. Variations of self-esteem in women would then depend on the extent to which they perceive themselves as having, or being able to have, the highly prized masculine characteristics.

This "masculinity" position explains more research findings than any other position offered concerning the development of self-esteem in women. It explains existing sex-differences in self-esteem, as well as the differences observed between black, white

and latino women. It can also be used to explain experimental changes in self-esteem produced in both men and women.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, men and women have experienced changes in self-esteem based on information given by a credible source regarding the masculine characteristics they possess (Whitaker, 1976). Contrary to popular belief that women should be pleased to have more feminine than masculine characteristics, it has been clearly established that "feminine" males have lower self-esteem than "masculine" females. "Masculine" males are also reported as having higher self-esteem than "feminine" males (Sappenfield, 1975). In short, "masculinity" in both sexes, has been clearly shown to have a significantly high correlation with self-esteem (Antill and Cunningham, 1979).

Based on the evidence presented, the position is advanced that self-esteem is an attitude, an opinion, a predisposition towards the self which is dependent on each individual's belief system. Women who perceive themselves as an extension of the important men in their lives, or who believe their function in life is to serve and be protected by others, would of necessity, have a lower opinion of themselves than women who do not hold these beliefs. This author's comparative study between black, white and latino women reflects this position. Latino women, who have shown significantly lower self-esteem than black and white women, have been taught to believe they are an extension of their families and the important men in their lives. White women share some of these beliefs, but not to the same extent as the latino women. Black women, reported as having higher self-esteem than white women, have been taught to believe they are responsible for their own survival and frequently for the survival of their families.

Viewed as an attitude, self-esteem is learned and subject to change. Therapeutic approaches to change women's self-esteem ought to focus on cognitive

processes to change their traditional beliefs; however, behavioral and affective aspects should not be discounted. Women should be rewarded in their attempts to display "masculine characteristics" leading to success in our society while providing them with the needed emotional support. Given the recognition for change, one should be aware of two possible barriers women must overcome in acquiring a new identity: the anxiety, produced by internal conflicts and the lag between a change in beliefs and resultant behaviors, and actual perception of the self as a new identity.

Once women are able to accept their new identity, the wide gap in self-esteem between the sexes should decrease. Women would then become happier and more productive individuals in their professional as well as traditional roles.

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## WOMEN EARN A NEW IDENTITY

by Carol LeFevre, Ph.D.



A profound change in the way women view themselves, make their choices, shape their lives, relate to others, and develop their identity has been going on in our society--a change that has accelerated rapidly in the last decade and a half. In this article some important elements in that change, and in unequal rates of change in different aspects of our culture and lives, will be examined in terms of both the new possibilities and the new vulnerabilities they create for the personal growth of women. The experiences of a group of homemakers who returned to school in the late sixties will be considered as a

particularly clear example of the potential and the stresses present in women's changing position (LeFevre 1971, 1972, 1975). Specifically, the differences between an ascribed identity based on having, and an earned identity based on being, will be explored.

As more and more women of all ages seek higher education and committed careers, questions concerning the fit between sex role socialization and the norms of higher level occupations become particularly salient. When young men are socialized into a professional role, they are implement-

ing their sex role identity in their work identity. But women are moving away from a strongly sex-typed identity ascribed on the basis of biology and relationship to a non-sexually defined work identity based on training and proved capacity. The author interviewed a total of 35 returning women graduate students, one group about to enter graduate school, one group approaching comprehensive examinations, and one group near graduation. Students were followed up approximately nine months later and again five years later. These women entered graduate school because they wished to escape from, or find replacements for, their homemaker-childrearing roles, and they chose to prepare for roles which would provide valued intellectual growth, professional collegueship, and an opportunity to make a useful contribution to society. As they moved through graduate school and into professional work, most grew markedly in confidence, autonomy, and ego strength, and a substantial minority described a more profound expansion of self and richness of experience. As one woman said of her graduate school experience:

I got so involved it has made a whole new person out of me, to the point that my children giggle at me that I can be this excited about something. I don't know but that there has been a whole personality change. I find I can do so much more and my stamina has increased. I have so much more interest in everybody else's work as a result. It's a renewal, it truly is.

How can this sense of excitement and growth be understood? No doubt part of it is the new-found freedom to develop and express cherished aspects of the self which had lain dormant during years of childrearing. The intellectual stimulation was also very important. Maslow once suggested that many women were ill from failure to use their intelligence (Maslow 1970), and the increased stamina noted in the quotation above does suggest

the lifting of depression. Novelty no doubt played a part, and other factors could be cited as well. But let us move to a consideration of the part played by the shift from an ascribed identity based on having a relationship to an identity earned through being an autonomous, competent, highly trained individual.

As wives, mothers, and homemakers these women had been identified primarily in terms of having a husband, having children, and having a properly furnished home. Who they were, depended upon whom they belonged to, and who belonged to them; the sources of their identity came from outside themselves. Though they might have many skills, they were likely to gain little respect or recognition for them. Rather, they were expected to respond to others' feelings, fulfill others' needs, and gain their satisfaction vicariously through others' accomplishments. The culture made a virtue of their selflessness in caring for their families. It is significant that the term "selflessness" carries not only the moral connotation of unselfishness but also the psychological meaning of being literally "without a self". The rather anguished statement of one returning student expresses this dual meaning:

I always taught (the children) to read before school. I taught them French. I've always taken them on nature trips, taken them to the art galleries... the complete support a child gets when he runs in from school and mother is always there...

I had reached the end of my rope in fulfilling the role of wife and homemaker. That was zero there and I had to develop a new identity. I had to do something to assert myself as a person or I would have become emotionally ill. The basis of my life had somehow passed and I really felt empty.

This woman had given herself completely to her family, developing her children's capacities and assisting her

husband's career. Having lived as a reflection of them, there was little substance remaining to her own existence when they had gone. In taking responsibility for others she had neglected to take responsibility for herself. She had no identity apart from them.

The kind of identity which comes through graduate training and a profession, on the other hand, is earned through hard work, years of education, the expansion of knowledge and skill, in short, through developing competence. In discussing his concept of identity Erikson (1959) says,

Man... must acquire...habitual use of a dominant *faculty*, to be elaborated in an *occupation*; a limitless *resource*, a feedback...from the immediate exercise of this occupation, from the companionship it provides, and from its *tradition*... (italics in the original)

Whether or not Erikson really included women when he spoke of "man," it is clear that he believes that socialization into a skilled occupation and work within the occupational group are highly significant for the full development of identity. No small part of that significance derives from the recognition and confirmation by work peers of the legitimacy of the individual's claims to competence, belonging, and a valued social and vocational identity. Many of the graduate women cited the importance to them of both their own growing sense of expertise developed through graduate study and the positive recognition of their abilities by peers and mentors. One woman who, in her identity as the wife of a prominent man, had felt ineffective and unrecognized as a member of charitable boards said,

I need this particular background to give myself an opportunity for expression. And I think it's building up my confidence in the fact that I have something to express and reason to express it. I am also seeing myself in rela-

tionship to other students and I am seeing my professors react to me, so I have a sounding board I didn't have before. This is reinforcing and supporting.

With this recognition and feedback she is coming to believe that she has something to say on her own that is worth listening to.

This issue of whether or not one has something worthwhile to offer is important for women, and reflects one of the points at which women must overcome their sex-role socialization if they are to actualize their full potential. A number of research studies (Mischel 1974, Etaugh & Rose 1975, Goldberg 1968) document the lower valuation given by both sexes to work presumed to have been produced by women. Over and over again the women in this study expressed their uncertainty about the worth of their ideas and their right to express them, an uncertainty still being expressed by many women today. Even women with considerable leadership experience have frequently exercised that function only with other women. Their professional socialization must, therefore, include opportunities to perform and receive feedback from men as well as women. Yet precisely because they are less likely to have had this kind of opportunity and recognition earlier, the experience of receiving it can be particularly significant and self-enhancing to women. After a year of functioning in seminars and coming to feel more competent and forceful, the woman quoted above told the interviewer:

I had to deliver a resume to the board and I wowed them. And all the big people--I didn't have one bit of fear. I don't care what their reaction is.

In fact "wowing" them gave her self-esteem and confidence a tremendous boost. At this point the virtues of Erikson's pre-identity stages seemed to be coming together for her--trust in herself and others, the autonomy to

will and do for herself, the initiative to conceive a project, and the competence to carry it out. She sums up her growing sense of identity when she says,

I am in the process of achieving something I felt was missing or necessary for my full development. This is the surprise, a sense of autonomy. This great sense of integration.

In her own thinking she is no longer functioning as her husband's shadow, but as a person who has earned her own identity and right to speak and be heard. With this new sense of herself has come a new conviction and forcefulness in her behavior which now leads other people to listen to her and respect what she has to offer.

But women may need some very specific training as they emerge from the shadow if they are to stand firmly on their own feet. The author recently observed a young female seminary student make a presentation in church. Her toes were turned inward, her knee bent as she spoke in a little-girl voice. Though her words were adult and professional, her body language and voice sent an all-too-clear conflicting message: "Don't judge me as a responsible grown-up; I am only a little girl." Her childlike stance is one of the many unconscious ways in which females learn to express tentativeness and deference and disclaim responsibility for their actions. Her double message reflects not only a lack of awareness of the impact of her actions but also a real temptation and conflict experienced by many women as they move out into more exposed roles. While the traditional female roles could be constricting and have often prevented the full development of personhood, there was safety and security in standing in the shadow. Two of the graduate women suffered severe loss of self-esteem when they failed their comprehensive examinations; the scars were still visible at the follow-up study five years later.

Another woman was not entirely unambivalent at returning to private life and independent research when she failed to receive tenure after six years of university teaching. Women who once saw only opportunity in storming male bastions are finding themselves nostalgic for the positive values of a once-scorned female role, and tempted by the possibility of retreat from the challenges and hazards of their new life. Taking real responsibility for themselves requires a careful examination of their own feelings, values, and options within a life-span perspective, and making realistic choices to implement their short-and long-range goals.

Whatever personal and professional goals women choose, they are discovering that the tentative, deferent styles they have learned as women do not foster autonomy or equality. As she consolidated her position in the professional world another graduate said;

I have stopped hesitating to assert my confidence and authority. I used to be very diffident about this, but I found that if I didn't assert myself I was in danger of being pushed around, not even intentionally. So as time went on I stopped deferring. Because I discovered it gets you nowhere. When I saw they didn't take this as surface politeness I changed. It's made things go much, much better.

A number of women reported learning to express themselves more directly and assertively. As they do so, women experience themselves more fully as agents acting in their own lives.

Why is this change in expressive style so important to the establishment of equal relationships and full identity? Anthropologist Quinn (1977) speculates that the greater verbal aggressiveness of males (Maccoby and Jacklin 1974) may be an important factor in male dominance and leadership, and several recent research studies suggest how it may operate. Women use more tentative

language (Fishman 1975, Parlee 1979), ask far more questions and initiate more topics in heterosexual conversation, but only male-initiated topics are regularly followed by discussion. Men frequently interrupted women (but not the reverse) and women tended to greater silence following interruptions (West and Zimmerman 1977). Other studies involving authority figures of both sexes suggest that these speech patterns are verbal politics, exhibitions of dominance and deference (Parlee 1979). Women simply will not get their fair share of time and influence in conversation if they follow the typical female patterns. Further, direct, assertive (differentiate from abrasive) behavior empowers the person using it. It carries authority because it requires acknowledging authorship. Indirect, deferent communication stems from, and confirms, a position of weakness, often utilizes manipulation, and disguises resentment. It does not make for healthy, trustworthy relationships. The style of communication is both formative of, and expressive of the person's identity.

Women now seem to be moving in the direction of attempting to bring together the best of both worlds--the caring and closeness of relationships and the being that comes from recognized competence and achievement. As women become more able to stand on their own feet, earn their own way, take responsibility for their own feelings, goals, and actions, and communicate honestly and directly, men too will be freed from a great burden of responsibility for, superiority to, and wariness of the subordinate, deferent, but non-responsible, manipulative, resentful woman.

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## ON THE FEMINIST STUDY OF MOTHERHOOD

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The topic of motherhood as an area of psychological interest has until recently received little attention. That the bearing and nurturing of young infants is a source of pleasure and gratification is a mythic tenet of our culture. Despite the prevalence of this view, or perhaps because of it, psychologists and especially feminist psychologists have not approached this area in much detail. The suggestion that motherhood may initiate (signal) a developmental advance has barely been raised within the recent psychological literature.

When mothers and mothering have been discussed by psychologists, it has been primarily in reference either to the adequacy with which infants are nurtured, or to the long-lasting effects of the mother's behavior and attitudes on her older and adult children. But there is another approach, especially relevant in the literature of psychoanalytic psychology, which provides a starting point for this discussion. The transmission of presumed sex-appropriate attributes, including the wish to mother, has been an important theme in that literature. A major feminist work on the subject<sup>1</sup> provides an advanced understanding, within the psychoanalytic perspective, of the origin and transmission of interest in and ability to mother. However, such a study of mothering stops short. In considering mothering behavior, we have only looked at its effect on children. Psychologists have not asked about the impacts of this new repertoire of affects, experiences and behaviors on the woman herself, except in her role as mother.

This article presents a perspective from which a feminist psychology may look at motherhood to ask other questions. After sketching a context within which our current neglect of this area may be viewed, I will suggest ideas that may be learned by asking about the benefits of motherhood in a different way.

I will begin by giving a brief overview of how mothering is seen in traditional psychoanalytic psychology. Secondly, I will present ideas about the psychology of men and, especially, the psychology of psychoanalysts to provide a lens through which traditional thoughts can be viewed. From there I plan to take a look at women's approach to work, to relationships and to the people they care about, to see what can be learned about the people who are mothers. Finally, if this journey is successful, I will present ideas about the study of motherhood that are radical, feminist and--the final

test of its value--ring true in the experience of those women who have borne and raised children. I consider this work to be "re-search" of the sort that Mary Daly<sup>2</sup> has taught us. It is travelling freshly over ground assumed to be charted, known and of little continuing interest.

#### Motherhood and Mothering in The Tradition of Psychoanalytic Psychology

The topic of motherhood has received little attention in the literature of psychoanalysis. Freud's general tendency to bypass questions about the specific course of libidinal development in little girls, and his admission of psychoanalysis' essential ignorance of the psychology of women are well-known. Horney<sup>3</sup> in 1926, expressed "amazement" that psychoanalytic accounts of women's eventual achievement of an adult, genital organization could leave out motherhood as a form of instinctual gratification. The theory that pregnancy and child-bearing are motivated out of the woman's unresolved envy of the male, and the "penis = child" equation has been largely supplanted. Ego-psychology, in which primacy is given to the girl's love for, and identification with her mother is the more prevalent view in analytic thought today.

Psychoanalytic ego-psychology places a major emphasis on the nature of the mother-infant dyad as the locus for experiences crucial to the infant's psychic well-being. It is noteworthy that by and large the major accounts of this relationship place major emphasis on the contribution of the mother and the experience of the child. Little attention is paid to the experience of the woman within the dyad.

Most recent psychoanalytic discussions of mothering have attempted to explain women's behavior with their young infants as evidencing a regression to early forms of object relations which are archaic and psychotic-like,<sup>4</sup> although they co-exist with continuing mature object relations. It has been

left implicit in such accounts, that extreme deviations from normal, adult functioning must be invoked to account for a mother's ability to sensitively respond to the needs of a non-verbal, demanding infant, and that the gratifications derived from such ministering reflect a regressed ego.

Embedded within this view is the assumption that a healthy "adult" ego would not find pleasure in what may appear from the outside to be a virtual submergence of one's own needs in the service of another person. Such an assumption it seems, is not far removed from Victorian conceptions of the Mother as one whose "unselfish life of sacrifice and devotion calls forth profound expressions of man's inherent love..."<sup>5</sup> The implication that a woman must renounce a portion of her adult status in order to successfully mother, is rife in psychoanalytic conceptions of motherhood. Often these views of motherhood require a "transformation" of passive needs to be cared for, into an active need to give.<sup>6</sup>

It seems that traditional psychoanalysis has viewed motherhood as a sacrifice: a reversal in development which allows a woman to partake vicariously from a lesser state, in the wished-for mastery over the world which is symbolized in her envy of the penis.

#### The Psychology of Psychoanalysis

In order to understand the psychic origins of these conceptions of motherhood; i.e., sacrificial regression and substitution for male potency, I will turn to the contribution that Jean Baker Miller has made toward our knowledge of male psychology.<sup>7</sup> In her account of the impact of dominant/subordinate relationships and their effects of men's and women's psyches, Miller points out several issues that are related to the unconscious determinants of psychoanalytic thought.

Miller notes that in any relationship between dominants and subordinates,

be they individuals, races or cultural groups, certain distasteful functions are relegated to the sphere of the subordinate group. In the case of men and women, she says that problems of weakness, vulnerability, and dependency are seen as shameful remnants of childhood which men struggle to master and assign to the devalued group: to women. This life-long denial of a significant portion of human needs leads to the fear that any response to the attractions of object relations carries with it the threat of reduction to "some undifferentiated mass or state ruled by weakness, emotional attachment and/or passion" and ultimately a loss of manhood (7, p.23).

That such functions are relegated to women is a consequence of our subordinate status; later the fact that women are particularly associated with the realm of weakness (vulnerability, attachment, nurturance) becomes a justification of our continued subordination.

This same dynamic, the avoidance of vulnerability, which leads men to view as threatening those situations where feelings of dependency are primary, can explain how it is that mothering behavior, an intense relationship with an apparently helpless person, is seen as a regression from adult ego functioning. Miller's account of the psychology of dominant people tells us that for them reciprocal/cooperative relationships mean "somehow to lose something or at best, altruistically, to give something away."<sup>8</sup> If this is a basic unconscious belief within male culture, then we can see that the painful dynamics of the battlefield, with the underlying maxim of 'if I win you must lose,' may influence the concepts of male-dominated fields--including psychoanalysis.

In the particular instance of motherhood, we can see that for someone who truly believes that reciprocity implies "giving up" something, the sight of a nursing's ultimate bliss must immediately and forcefully suggest that someone has "lost". It is not hard

to realize that an explanation of motherhood created by a group holding these unconscious beliefs must include a rationalization for sacrifice. The only dynamic that, in this world view could explain providing such pleasure to someone else, is one of willing sacrifice--martyrdom or (in analytic parlance) feminine masochism.



#### Women's Way

Miller has told us something about how vulnerability and dependency appear to a dominant group which repudiates such feelings in its cultural norms, if not in each individual. She has also addressed how these same feelings are understood by the subordinate group--those who have been assigned the task of knowing

about, experiencing and responding within nurturing relationships. Women, she says, are the "carriers" of these devalued functions for the culture as a whole. Certainly this role has led to difficulties for many women: for example, the belief that by performing nurturant functions one assures the continuing love of those nurtured. However, there are certain special strengths which women derive from this life-long familiarity with dependency. Primary among these is the "insight that events are important and satisfying only if they occur within the context of emotional relatedness."<sup>9</sup> Women have not, by and large, internalized these 'battlefield' assumptions. Cooperation, for women, is seen as a growth process for all participants and does not imply that anything is lost or given away.

The view that women bring to nurturing relationships is one distinctly lacking in the fear that to assist in another's growth means



loss of adulthood or an increase in one's own vulnerability. Instead, the opportunity to observe, participate in and assist in another's change is seen as the interpersonal counterpart of creativity and personal growth. Women know that meaningful personal growth cannot occur in isolation. Thus the bi-polarity embedded in cultural assumptions that define cooperation as "give-and-take" can be replaced with a texture of reciprocity better described as "give-and-give."<sup>10</sup> If we look at mother-child relationships with this particularly female viewpoint, a new perspective emerges.

### A Feminist View of Motherhood

Feminist scholarship can be defined as work which asks scholarly questions from a view as uniquely female as traditional scholarship has been male. When such a perspective has been turned to the experience of motherhood, a distinctly new question has to be asked. In contrast to the psychoanalytic dilemma: (why and how does a woman give up her adulthood to enter a nearly psychotic relationship with her newborn?) feminists must ask about the readiness to achieve an integrated experience in which another's growth can be fostered without experiencing personal loss.

The transcendence of what Jane Flax has called the "nurturance autonomy conflict"<sup>11</sup> has been a central conflict for feminists. To the extent that feminist women have adopted the male concept that nurturance and interpersonal relatedness must oppose individual achievement, and to the degree that our experience in the present culture reinforces that view,<sup>12</sup> we have been unable to see that there may be no conflict. If feminist thinkers adhere to the female knowledge that meaningful personal growth requires an interpersonal context, it would be impossible for statements like "motherhood is irrelevant to feminism—since plenty of people are making babies, there will always be enough" to be made.

Of course, the actual state of being a mother may not be relevant to many feminists. To the degree that our achievements and livelihoods must be made in a male-dominated society, we may not be able to choose mothering a child of our own. But to reject thinking about motherhood is to reject an important source of knowledge about women's way of growing and relating.

A feminist perspective on mothering allows us to observe a nursing pair and ask "what is new for the woman in that experience?" not, "why has that woman given up her adulthood to nurture infants?". We need to consider that birthing and living with a newborn may be an opportunity for development rather than a loss of mastery. To consider this possibility requires that we think about the topic neither as would fathers or daughters, but as women and mothers.

To do so, is surely a risk. Too many times women have been told by male writers that mothering is our ultimate fulfillment--with the unspoken implication that household drudgery and loss of adult achievements must follow. If we hear the proposition that mothering may lead to growth, by adopting the fathers' perspective we may fall victim to the fallacy I have described: the belief that nurturance itself requires loss of independent mastery and adult status. In another way, from our experience as daughters we may, reject this idea out of rage over generations of women's sacrifices and the fear of repeating those sacrifices.

If, however, we can look at motherhood neither as fathers nor as daughters, but as feminist mothers would, we may find that motherhood is the prime model for what I have called "woman's way." Approaching the study of motherhood free of the assumption that nurturance equals loss allows us to initiate a feminist study of motherhood.

In such an inquiry we may consider the hypothesis that a uniquely female growth occurs in the experience of mothering a newborn. Undoubtedly, the opportunities for expression of that growth have been nullified by the sacrifices imposed on mothers by the society, but our scholarship permits us to see the two separately and to discover what capacities

in a woman are opened up in the process of birthing and nurturing an infant.

Patriarchal theories portray the wish for a child as resignation, sacrifice and substitution. In them a woman's pleasure with her young infant must be seen as regression away from individuality and mastery. A feminist view in contrast, asks what propels us to wish for babies when we are little girls and more importantly, what we gain as women when we bear and nurture them.

Nancy Chodorow's landmark work, The Reproduction of Mothering gives a thorough and feminist account of the dynamic forces that lead women to acquire gender-specific qualities, especially those related to mothering. What remains for a feminist psychology is to inquire about the impact that the mothering experience may have on women's capacities for relatedness in general. New insights or self-perceptions that can be turned to the general experiences of achievement in interpersonal contexts may result. What is proposed here is that the study of mothers--not as evaluations of caregivers, but as observations of women through their involvement in a uniquely female relationship--may teach us more about women's particular capacities that have importance beyond our ability to create and nurture new generations.

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## THE HIGH ACHIEVING WOMAN & STRESS

By Pam Rebeck, Ph.D.  
Bonnie A. Rudolph, Ph.D.

All people, regardless of age, sex, or level of achievement experience stress; however the degree and kind of stress vary among individuals and circumstances. Change is a key factor which lies at the root of stress. Contemporary life is different from other points in human history because of the vast expansion of upheaval. People today engage routinely in buying and discarding products; they adapt to domiciliary change, career and employment moves and to new people. The future of family and marriage, as well as friendships has an air of impermanence.

Besides physical transience, individual commitment to intellectual, affective, religious and social values often shift throughout the life span. In addition, the pace of life has accelerated radically. The tempo of our daily activities affects not only the way we feel about the world and ourselves, but also affects our performance.

Some people revel in the rapid tempo of contemporary life and others are repelled by the "rat race." (Selye 1974). To survive, and certainly to compete in our complex technological society means to participate in a world moving faster than ever before. Those people who are committed to the accelerated pace prefer numerous stimulating social and professional engagements, prefer to travel, and prefer to be upwardly and onwardly mobile. These people tend to live faster than the rest of humankind; they tend to be better educated and to be more affluent. (Toffler, 1970) Such is the circumstance surrounding a person who is a high achiever. There is an inordinate amount of stress inherent in being a high achieving person, irrespective of the sex of such an individual. When a high achiever is female the stress is

magnified.

There are several variables that contribute to an intense level of stress in high achieving women. One contributing factor is that such a woman engages in transitions to roles different from those to which she was socialized. Commitment to a career normally takes place during the same period in which less career motivated women become homemakers and help husbands and children to realize their life goals. Women striving to accomplish a nontraditional goal have to confront their own socialization patterns advocating the woman's identity and life style as a caretaker. Pressure to procreate in accordance with the traditional family time frame may need to be confronted. Additionally, the high achieving woman must balance the need for intimacy with the need for achievement. The management of busy schedules, often including travel, stresses any relationship she may develop. Once these issues are confronted, there remains the environmental problem of limited availability of stimulating partners who are not threatened by a high achieving woman.

An additional variable contributing to stress in a high achieving woman is overt and covert resistance from a substantial number of conservatives. Business people as well as family members (including other women) often have negative images of a woman in a "worldly" or competitive role. Differences in life style frequently lead to negative judgments: stereotypes of high achieving women as being masculine, castrating, and/or selfish. The women striving to accomplish a nontraditional goal often faces such resistance alone. The occupational support system, especially helpful to younger members of a profession, is missing for women. (Sheehy, 1976). The mentor relationship is just starting to evolve between women, perhaps rarely evident due to a scarcity of established women available to assume the mentor role. This places a handicap on women entering a profession, as it limits career contacts which might further professional development.

In response to a demanding life style and the rapid tempo of life, the high achieving woman needs to develop creative methods for coping with extremely high levels of stress. The essential element in creative coping is self-awareness. The high achieving woman needs to identify her own optimal stress level and attempt to not exceed it. She also needs to identify her personal stress reaction pattern and the signals which warn of excessive stress. Thoughtful planning and pacing of chosen stress (i.e. job changes, moves) is a helpful coping technique as is periodic self-review regarding the quality, volume, diversity, routine and pace of life. Asking for professional help is also a productive coping technique. A short-term stress response psychotherapy or counseling experience increases the high achieving woman's self-awareness by identifying acute and chronic stresses in her life; it may facilitate the development of more diverse coping/adjustment techniques.

Physical exercise may also aid the high achieving woman in attaining a more balanced and diversified life style. Two forty-five minute strenuous exercise routines weekly helps the high achiever "burn off" emotional stress, while keeping the body in good condition. Proper nutrition, a key factor for physical well-being, can also affect reaction to stress. Vitamin B complex and vitamin C may help the body resist the negative infection-fighting effects of stress, and low sugar intake and natural and low-carbohydrate foods help maintain physical well-being.

In addition to developing habits of self-awareness, sound nutrition, and regular exercise, one may reduce stress by engaging in a daily relaxation exercise. The relaxation response (Benson, 1975) or meditation are both good techniques to employ in reducing tension. Benson's relaxation technique is especially helpful when making a transition, for instance from professor to consultant, consultant to friend, or service provider to researcher. Last-

ly, a support system of colleagues, close friends, and family are critically important in resolution of acute stress. The support system serves to dissipate and make more palatable the ongoing stress that precedes and accompanies the satisfaction of accomplishment.

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## BREAST CANCER AND PEER COUNSELING

by Mimi Kaplan & Ann Marcou

If we are to believe the stories in popular magazines, women who undergo mastectomies are mutilated, psychologically traumatized and suicidal. In our breast conscious society, supposedly, the amputation of the breast leaves the woman forever scarred, emotionally as well as physically. One woman describes her experience in the following way: "From the moment my physician said that I had metastatic breast cancer, until two years after my surgery, I was frozen with fear... The threat of death hung over me day and night, but I believe that the mutilation was more traumatic." <sup>1</sup> Medical <sup>2</sup> and psychological literature<sup>3</sup> is as much at fault in perpetuating this myth as popular literature <sup>4,5</sup> and television.

As mastectomy co-founders of "Y-Me?" a breast cancer support program, the authors have been in contact with nearly two hundred women with breast cancer over the past two and a half years. A minority of women deny the frightening fact that they have a life threatening illness by focusing only on breast loss. Centering on so called "mutilating" amputation of the breast, these women are displacing the cancer diagnosis. What does concern most women is that they have cancer. Their lives are threatened, and they have to face their own mortality.

Three years ago the authors became acquainted and began to share feelings of how isolated and alone they felt while going through the experience of a cancer diagnosis, surgery and subsequent therapy. Mimi had a mastectomy in 1977 and was told she would need further treatment, called "adjuvant chemotherapy". Ann was told she should have a prophylactic mastectomy of the second breast because of danger of the disease spreading. We talked about our fears and anxieties and how we had wished for someone to



If you've thought about breast cancer ...

talk to who had been through the same experience. From these talks we came to the conclusion that there was a need for an ongoing support system for women with breast cancer. We believed that talking to and being with other women (role models) who had been through the experience themselves, was an important part of the psychological and physical rehabilitation process. We also found numerous articles in both psychological <sup>6,7</sup> and medical literature to support our beliefs. <sup>8</sup> Upon further research into the literature we found few such groups in existence. One, Reach to Recovery, offers the woman temporary support only while she is hospitalized, but has no follow-up program.

Until recently, the Reach to Recovery type of support service for the breast cancer patient was thought to be adequate for many women. However, with the change in treatments and the excessive conflicting media reports regarding breast cancer, women are asking for and want more information about their diseases.<sup>9</sup> Many need more than one hospital visit.

Frequently, a Reach to Recovery visitor would appear when the patient wasn't ready to face up to her illness. Often, the reality of the situation didn't set in until weeks or months later. Unlike Reach, Y-Me? believed support was needed for a time following surgery. Because of our experience we decided to set up a hotline phone service to answer calls from women needing information and psychological support before and/or after surgery. Many calls were from women on chemotherapy who needed reassurance and encouragement. We set up weekly support groups for women who wanted to talk and share. Workshops were conducted for women wanting education concerning all aspects of breast disease and its various treatments.

Our hotline, self-help groups and workshops are facilitated by volunteers who have had breast cancer. For two years Mimi was on chemotherapy and feels empathetic towards other women undergoing treatment. She is able to give them encouragement and support. A university professor and librarian, she has done extensive research on this disease. She conducts workshops and seminars on breast cancer. Besides having had cancer herself, Ann is a therapeutic counselor and is well qualified to lead self-help groups as well as do individual counseling. She has also watched a sister die from breast cancer after a long, painful fight. Both her professional and personal experience give her a unique sensitivity to both the patient and their family's needs.

Each of us have had days when we wanted to run away from the program. There have been times when we've had to watch a woman we've grown to love and admire fight courageously for her life, only to lose. We've made beautiful friendships; breast cancer seems to strike some pretty terrific women. We have learned that there is true therapy in giving and that in sharing, we receive.

We are convinced that support programs such as ours are necessary.

To be able to share and express the deep feelings and fears that cancer elicits in each of us is a necessary part of the healing process. For the woman with breast cancer, the doctor, her family, and her friends must realize that more than the external scar needs healing.

Hotlines and self-help groups staffed by peer volunteers are not only valuable resources for the cancer patient, they have an excellent therapeutic effect on the volunteer. When cancer is diagnosed, the patient must face her own mortality. For many this means a re-assessment of life goals and values and establishing new and different priorities in life. It can also involve basic personality changes. For the authors it meant becoming more self-assertive and a turning outward towards others for self-fulfillment. One of the first things a cancer patient may ask is, "what have I done with my life?" For some there is no greater satisfaction than helping another human being. Being a cancer volunteer can give one's life meaning. By helping others, we give ourselves a goal. We want to stay well so that we can remain role models for others. There always seems to be someone less fortunate. Both authors have had some feelings of "it couldn't be me," or "it couldn't happen to me." The horror lies in the fact that we also know very well that it could happen again. There is always the irrational wish component of non-recurrence pitted against the fact that breast cancer is still the leading cause of death in women between the ages of 40 and 44.<sup>9</sup> As volunteers we must recognize our own fears before we can be of help to another.

Group experiences have taught us that in a sharing situation most breast cancer patients derive assurance and encouragement from each other. The most important thing is knowing that someone else has had the same feelings and the same problems. It is also important to know others are finding coping mechanisms that work.

Often the woman who has undergone breast cancer surgery fears that she will not be able to resume her previous responsibilities and activities. She is afraid for her life, afraid she will not be in control, afraid her husband or lover will reject her, afraid that radiation and/or chemotherapy treatments will make her so sick she can no longer function in her usual role. Her first experience in a peer group can be of major importance to her in that she sees other women coping and functioning. She is able to see that others too, have irrational fears. Realizing that these fears are common to other breast cancer patients, her self-confidence improves and she finds it easier to resume her presurgical life style.

A good role model is extremely important during this difficult time. It can often make the difference between staying on chemotherapeutic drugs and terminating treatment. It is reassuring for women on chemotherapy to see others who are functioning well. Examining a prosthesis (breast form) before buying one has made the trauma of that first purchase easier to bear. Films about breast cancer provide the new patient with up-to-date information on her disease. Feeling in control, knowing that she has the necessary information for making intelligent choices regarding treatment, being able to have an active role in her future are all important learning experiences for the breast cancer patient. These are areas in which the peer counselor can be of aid.

The psychosocial needs of the breast cancer patient deserves more attention. The social worker, psychologist, therapist and nurse are necessary adjuncts to the peer cancer counselors. Although many doctors have been cautioned against becoming emotionally involved with their patients, peer volunteers can and do become emotionally involved when they see another person dying of the same disease. Trained health care professionals can be of tremendous assistance and worthwhile members of the cancer support team if they can

accept and lend support to the cancer volunteer. In the future, the authors would like to see a more cohesive unit that consists of both peer counselors and professionals in the health care and mental health fields. We feel that each has a good deal to offer the other. Out of this joint venture we see a system that can be of real benefit to not only the breast cancer patient, but anyone who has a life threatening illness.

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## FOCUSING: A METHOD FOR ACHIEVING AUTHENTIC ROLES

by Elfie Hinterkoppf

Ever since I was a little girl, I have had arguments with men. I most often lost these arguments, and lost trust in myself in the process. I remember one argument with my father about the unfairness of my having to wash dishes while my brothers didn't. I lost that argument and remember sitting on the porch afterwards crying by myself for I knew not what. There are still times when I experience confusion about sex-role expectations. But since that time I have learned to focus with the focusing technique I learned to feel into my bodily sense and to trust it, thereby learning to trust myself. By trusting myself more, I have learned to live my role as a woman authentically from within, rather than allowing it (and myself) to be determined by external, traditional sex-role expectations.

In his latest book, Focusing (1978), Gendlin describes the technique by which people can attend to their felt sense--their bodily-felt experience of a problem which may not yet be conceptually clear. Most people, in dealing with a problem, concentrate on that part of the problem which they already know. In psychotherapy research (Gendlin, 1966, 1968; Metarazzo, 1965; Rogers, 1967; Tomlinson, 1959, 1962; Tomlinson & Hart, 1962; Truax, 1963; Walker, Rablen, and Rogers, 1959) it has been found that positive change comes from paying attention to that part of the problem which one does not yet know, called the "felt sense". Paying attention to this felt sense is similar to attending to the vague feeling one has when something has been forgotten but cannot be identified.

A practical example of using focusing within an authentic relationship might be helpful at this point: Lisa, a professional woman, does not feel

comfortable in letting Joe pay the expenses when they get together. However, splitting the cost of everything or going "dutch" doesn't feel right either. Although the latter behavior might be considered by some as the role of the liberated woman, it can be as restrictive as the traditional roles because it too, imposes a strict pattern of behavior. Splitting the cost of everything leaves Lisa with a vague, lonely, separated-from-Joe felt sense. Instead of continuing the relationship with this uncomfortable feeling, Lisa can focus.

First, she will find a quiet place, relax, and breathe deeply for a few moments, clearing her mind of everything she already knows and paying attention instead to her bodily felt sense. In this case, Lisa examines the vague, lonely, separated-from-Joe felt sense which she experiences as an emptiness in her chest. She then checks the rest of her body, especially her torso, for other bodily sensations. Lisa finds a warm surge in her stomach which gets stopped at her chest. With that warm feeling in her stomach, comes the image of a fountain, which is blocked by the emptiness in her chest. She asks this image what it is about and lets new words or images come to her from the felt sense, rather than intellectualizing or rationalizing. The word "spontaneous" comes to her. She checks this word with her bodily sense to see if it feels right. (If the word is not right, for example if it is intellectualized, there will be no change in her bodily sense.) When checked, the word "spontaneous" brings a feeling of release. The fountain is now able to flow without being stopped. (This feeling of release is similar to the relief felt when remembering the item you forgot to pack on the trip. Even if the forgetting is inconvenient, there is true relief in knowing what has been forgotten.)

Now Lisa asks this new felt sense what it is about, and realizes that it would feel better to spontaneously

pay for things as long as this feels agreeable to both.

After completing the focusing process, Lisa decides that if either she or Joe feels uneasy about the money situation, it should be the responsibility of that person to verbalize this discomfort. So Lisa must talk with Joe to learn if this arrangement feels right for him. Preferably, Joe will also be able to focus and share what feels right for him, although both partners may not be able to reach this type of awareness at the same time.

Living from the inside felt sense, achieved through the process of focusing, sharing, and negotiating can lead to a relationship based on authentic roles. This is different from living according to the old roles in which contents of behavior, such as "the man must always pay", were predetermined and culturally imposed. While traditional roles imposed contents from outside, new authentic roles specify the process by which the behavior is determined--regardless of sex.

Practicing focusing techniques within a relationship has several beneficial effects. With the contents of traditional male/female roles in such flux, much confusion exists today. Traditional guidelines are vanishing, leaving individual needs and circumstances to guide our behavior. A typical example is the wife returning to school or work who encounters conflicting professional and household obligations. Such conflicts demand new nontraditional divisions of labor within the family, which can be a stressful process. Focusing, since it facilitates staying in touch with oneself in the midst of these changing roles, can be most helpful.

Because focusing can be done alone, it is especially useful for the married woman experiencing role changes. Frequently her main source of validation is her husband. Because the role a wife is trying to change

often affects her relationship to her husband, she frequently experiences his resistance and a lack of validation from him. But focusing can provide the married woman with the inner source of validation and confidence needed when going through such difficult times.

Sharing focusing also keeps the relationship interesting and exciting. Boredom in a relationship often results from talking only about that material which one already knows. When couples share focusing, they continually share that which is new and unique--because everyone's focusing process at any given time is unique.

In the past, those who rejected traditional roles found themselves caught between the choice of living in existing structures, which often caused internal deadening, or accepting chaos--without values and standards. Hopefully, in the future both women and men need not choose either of these ways, but can adopt an alternative by becoming role creators through sharing the process of being in authentic relationships. In this way, perhaps, a new society can be formed which will be less oppressive for everyone.

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## CHANGING MEN<sup>1</sup> by David Matteson

Due to the women's movement, or more commonly due to the pressure for role changes from a particular woman, many men have begun to examine sex role issues. In the last few years I have witnessed many men changing, especially in the men's groups in which I have participated. During these years I have also witnessed many men defending their own status quo--reacting to sex role changes as to a threat, and becoming increasingly rigid about what the sex roles ought to be. This has aroused my interest in trying to discern the factors which facilitate changing men.

At a meeting of Chicago Men's Gathering<sup>2</sup> about a year ago, some twenty men were discussing an issue over which the group was divided. As different members sought to make their points, the atmosphere subtly began to shift from men caring for each other to men competing. But even before my conscious mind had taken note of the shift, one member

asked gently, "Is this what we want from being together?" In this particular group, already committed to a non-sexist philosophy, that simple question was enough. We were immediately in touch with our desires, our longings: to be together. Discussion and disagreement continued--but without further put-downs.

The experience was memorable in its contrast to hundreds of faculty meetings and other male-dominated events in which I've participated. The words "Is this what we want?" continue to echo in my ears.

Here was the clue. Changing men are men who see alternatives, and can get in touch with what they themselves want. For these men, change is not a reaction to women's change, but an awareness of themselves and their own needs, and of the alternatives available.

Experiences such as this led me to review the research on changing men and women. Though careful research is sparse, it is generally agreed that women, at least in segments of our society, hold less stereotypic attitudes toward sex roles today than did women a few years back. Whether men's attitudes are changing is questionable.

Since adolescence appears to be a crucial period in the formation of sex role attitudes and behaviors, I focused my attention on that age group. Previous research has shown that adolescents fit the same pattern as do other age groups: female youth hold less rigid stereotypes than their male peers. Der-Karabetian and Smith (1977) confirmed this for a group of high school and college students, using an adjective check list. My own pilot study used a content analysis of responses to interviews with high school psychology students in Park Forest, and found the same pattern. Boys appeared more traditional both in attitudes and in reported behaviors than girls (Matteson, 1980a).

Two factors help to explain the observations that high school boys are more rigid regarding sex roles than their female peers: the more rigid stereotyping of boys during childrearing (Matteson, 1975), and the greater attention (e.g., in the media) paid to changes in women's roles than to possibilities for changes in men's roles. Possibly, men's attitudes would become more liberal if men, instead of having to react to women's changes, were provided with male models of non-sexist lifestyles, alternatives to the stereotypic ways of being a man.

This was my hypothesis in the next pilot study (Matteson, 1980b). I used a pure experimental design: the twelve males and sixteen females attending a meeting of a Protestant youth group were randomly assigned to two conditions. Half saw a movie which discussed traditional masculine sex roles and portrayed men living a variety of alternatives. The other half saw a "placebo" movie, not related to sex roles. I hypothesized that men, after seeing alternatives for men's roles, would be more tolerant regarding women's roles. That's exactly what happened. The men who saw the movie Men's Lives<sup>3</sup> scored much higher in attitudes toward women<sup>4</sup> than those viewing the placebo movie.<sup>5</sup> In this experiment the women were placed in a reactive position (since the movie focused on changes in men's roles) in much the way men are usually in a reactive position (to changes in women's roles); the results were that no change occurred for women; i.e. the attitudes of the women who viewed the film Men's Lives were no different from those who viewed the control film.

What these results suggest is that changes in men's attitudes about sex roles, indeed, in men's attitudes toward women, are facilitated by providing men with alternative models for the male role. The research lends support to my earlier observation: changing men are men who see alternatives and can get in touch with what they themselves want. Re-

acting to changes in the other sex does not produce change in oneself (at least in this study); it may produce a defensive reaction.

Perhaps some of the women reading this article had hoped for tips on how women can go about changing men. By now it is clear that I believe men change men. I do not believe change comes only from within--but that men, collectively, help one another redefine what masculinity means. Our men's groups have learned from women's consciousness-raising groups, and some of us will continue to learn from women. But for many, women are seen as having a vested interest in changing men. Coming from a woman, the statement "I want you to change because it will be good for you," is not likely to be believed. But perhaps men can hear and experience from other men that being with equals in a non-competitive, caring way is good for us. When we are with other men and experience caring among equals, perhaps we'll want equality in our relationships with women as well.



For the woman who longs for that process to begin in a man she cares about, my only advice is that, if possible, he be presented with alter-

atives for men from men. Perhaps you  
can leave this article lying around!  
I hope it succeeds--for his sake.

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### Notes

1. I have borrowed by title from an album, "Walls to Roses: Songs of Changing Men," 1979, Folkways Records, 43 W. 61st St., New York, N.Y. 10023.
2. Chicago Men's Gathering, P.O. Box 11076, Chicago, Ill. 60611.
3. "Men's Lives," by Josh Hanig and Will Roberts; distributed by New Day Films, Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.
4. The instrument used was "The Attitude Toward Women Scale", by Spence, J. and Helmreich, R. Journal Supplement Abstract Service, Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology, 1972, 2 (Manuscript no. 153).
5. The difference for men approached statistical significance (p. .07) even though the sample was small.

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## LETTER FROM HOLLAND

On a windy and sunny spring day I took myself to Amsterdam to visit the International Archives of the Women's Movement (Stichting Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging). On the way I passed street graffiti that told me that the women of Amsterdam were also involved in the "Take Back the Night" movement against pornography and violence; saw posters that urged a stop to nuclear energy projects; and visited the home of Anne Frank. There one sees the old bookcase that hid the secret door to the Annex, the room where she wrote her diary, the walls with pictures which Anne cut from magazines and pasted there. It is a pilgrimage. In these shabby rooms, in the presence of these shocking photographs, one is reminded of the persistence of hatred and bigotry in the world: to shed a tear is inevitable. If gentle Anne were alive today she would be fifty years old...and still fighting for her ideals that "people are really good at heart"...? On to the Archives:

I enter a room entirely filled with books, magazines, documents, photographs, filling shelves, cartons, and stacked on the floor. Only a central large library table is clear for study. The walls are covered with posters in many languages, dating back for decades. I am met by the librarian, Claire Rappange, who has given me this hour for an interview. These Archives are old friends of TCW--they have been our subscribers from our first year. Claire is a competent, direct, friendly young woman, a compact figure in her navy blue jumpsuit. She is one of five full-time paid workers, assisted by five volunteers. I learn, to my surprise, that the Archives were founded in 1935.

Following suffrage which, as in the United States, was attained in 1919, women thought for a while that they had reached their goal, only to discover that they were restricted in their work by many government restric-



internationaal archief  
voor de  
vrouwenbeweging

jaarverslag 1978

tions and handicapped by the lack of ready access to essential information. They needed a place to assemble documents and a study center; thus, they became re-activated. The collection which now serves both historical research and contemporary studies, was started by the donation of five hundred volumes by Rosa Manus, an organizer of international conferences, who handed over the library of Dr. Aletta H. Jacobs, the first Dutch woman physician, practitioner of obstetrics and gynecology, who did research in contraception as early as 1900.

In 1940 the Archives were closed by the Nazis who expropriated most of the collection. "They were as afraid of the women's movement as they were of any other form of freedom, democracy, or socialism", remarks Claire. After the war, everything had to be started over. It was difficult to interest the government in support for the Archives and the project was somnolent, with no paid librarian until 1968. There were all sorts of troubles with the government sponsors, the directors, the staff, and in the midst of all these troubles, a collective was formed. "Then something interesting happened: all the troubles were gone!"

By 1975 (International Year of the Woman) financial support was somewhat better but still not nearly sufficient. In the five years since, visits to the Archives have grown from 200 a year to 4500 a year. Several thousand books are catalogued and the serial holdings include 287 periodicals. The staff is looking forward to a move to larger quarters and plan to join with three other organizations to create a National Center for Women. Claire is talking about her hopes for the Archives: "We want to build very slowly. We don't want to lose the good working relationships we have developed in this small collective. Each woman has her own responsibility for cleaning and everyone is responsible for the whole thing. We also want our salaries to be about equal. We don't ask for someone to clean the building. We do it. Everyone does some of the 'dirty' work and everyone does some of the 'finer' work. We believe that if, in the world, all people would do some of the 'dirty' work, there would be fewer divisions among us".

As we discussed the various issues that concern women everywhere, I learned that the one issue which will bring everybody onto the streets in Holland is abortion, which is not yet fully legal here.

I left the Archives laden with a poster of "Annie"--Annie Romein-Verschoor, marxist feminist historian, under my arm, as well as a copy of a French feminist weekly, first to publish the work of dissident Russian women. (See page 36). Claire's response to my inquiry about Almanakh was warm and immediate: ("Would you like a copy? I'll copy it for you.")

What is perhaps most striking about this remarkable place is the way in which a small group of women have formed a non-hierarchical organizational structure which has borne fruit in the development of a distinguished collection, imaginative services of distribution, and a

delightful atmosphere in which to work or study. This may be the truly revolutionary aspect of our movement, I thought as I walked back to the train station: as Sara Shumer wrote (TCW, Summer 1979) to live together "with our capacity for justice and dialogue...with our capacity for inclusiveness and collective action, not competition nor domination".

Readers are invited to complete the questionnaire on page 35 and to mail it to the women in Herengracht Street. Your work will be listed in a periodical devoted to the continuing updating of research materials, so that you can be in touch with women elsewhere in the world who are working in a related field. Donations to the Archives are sought: please send small magazines, pamphlets, photographs, notices of women's meetings and events as well as books. They will be welcome.

Helen E. Hughes, Editor



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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESEARCH INDEX

The purpose of this questionnaire of the IAV is to make an inventory of the research in progress on the position of women and the women's movement.

The subjects of research will be arranged systematically and will be available for consultation by callers and enquirers at the IAV.

Research on the same subject can be coördinated better this way, since one will be able to communicate with each other. Unless you specifically state otherwise, it is assumed that you have no objection to the information you provide being accessible to interested parties, or published.

Name:

Date:

Address:

Phone:

Short title of your research:

Is your research on a specific country:

In what capacity are you doing this research? (e.g. School-student, Ph.D., Trade union, Women's group).

Relevant qualifications; experience:

Name of supervisor:

Who is funding your research?

Problems you've encountered in your research; suggestions?

Have you published anything or are you planning to do so?  
Please give details.

The IAV is always grateful for gifts of published or unpublished papers, pamphlets etc.

FROM THE USSR: A NEW FEMINIST  
UNDERGROUND PUBLICATION

Sophia Sokolova, Tatianana Mamonova and Julia Voznesenskaya had just published the first issue of Almanakh: Women and Russia, an underground magazine or samizdat, devoted to a feminist critique of the role of women in Society society, when they were detained and threatened by the KBG and warned that they would be arrested if they continued. There may never be an issue No. 2, but the first issue contains powerful and moving material. The Creative Woman obtained a copy of the French translation, published in des femmes en mouvements hebdo in January 1980, and hopes to obtain rights to an English translation. Reproduced here is the Russian title, the French version of Mamonova's preamble, and my translation. We hope to bring you more in future issues as these long-stilled voices are raised in bitter complaint and poignant song.  
(See Newsweek, April 7, 1980, page 35, international edition)

(translated from the Russian by Judith Stora-Sandor, des femmes en mouvements hebdo, Paris

translated from the French by Helen Hughes)

# ЖЕНЩИНА и РОССИЯ

## Préambule

Comment est-ce né?  
Dans la douleur  
comme naît l'homme!  
Comment est venue la merveille?  
par la tristesse  
comme le visage de l'homme.  
Comment y suis-je arrivée?  
pieds nus  
comme on parvient à la ville bien aimée  
Comment l'ai-je trouvé?  
difficilement  
comme on trouve ses amis  
comme je vous ai trouvés  
vous qui lirez ces lignes!

Preamble

Tatiana Mamonova

How does it come?

Like the labor of childbirth!

How does the miracle come?

Through the sorrow

in a human face.

How did I get here?

on foot

as one comes to a longed for land.

How did I find it?

with difficulty

As one discovers friends

As I have found you

You who read these lines!

YOU READ IT FIRST IN THE CREATIVE WOMAN

The Current issue of The American Psychologist (Vol. 35, No. 3, 244-252) presents Leonard Eron on "Prescription for Reduction of Aggression", in which he proposes that boys be exposed to the same training that girls have traditionally received in our society, and that they be encouraged to develop similar kinds of socially positive, tender, cooperative, nurturant, and sensitive qualities, which are antithetical to aggressive behavior.

This argument will not be news to our readers, who learned that Dr. Eron believes that "Males can learn not to be aggressive", and that "we should socialize boys more as we have been socializing girls", as he wrote in our issue in Fall 1979, OUR WORLD'S CHILDREN (Vol. 3, No. 2).

Professor Eron went on to write (page 11 of TCW) "Rather than insisting that little girls should be treated like little boys and given the same opportunities for participation in athletic events etc... it should be the other way around. Boys should be socialized the way girls have been traditionally socialized and they should be encouraged to develop civilized qualities like tenderness, nurturance, cooperation and aesthetic sensitivity."

Since feminists today argue that women ought to have the same opportunities, rights, privileges and experiences as men, it is extremely interesting to note that there are voices also being raised by male psychologists who claim that men ought to have the same opportunity to become fully caring and fully human in a way that has previously been traditionally assigned only to women.

It is in this convergence of sensibilities and consciousness that we may discern the hopeful glimpse of a truly human society yet to be born, of boys and girls, men and women, of the future.

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